



March 2007

To all White Cross Supporters and Friends,

I've just returned from Romania where I made a quick visit to check on the Guest House and yes, the chances are, that with a following wind we will manage to open on time!

There's still a lot to do but, with a crew of 20 workmen, it's amazing what can be achieved in a day.

There has been very little snow in Transylvania this winter but plenty of rain. The fields are sodden and everything is grey and the temperatures remained between 4 and 11 degrees Centigrade for the few days I was there. Its alarming to realise that global warming is having such an effect but, as you might imagine, the local worry is not about the state of the world, just whether, without the winter frosts, there will be enough fruit on the plum trees this year to make the palinka.

Popa's family have moved into their new house next to the old church and are very content. Anamaria is being troubled with intermittent pain from a kidney stone but, because she feels fine between the bouts she is not bothering to get it sorted. I've told her that I will phone every day until she's gone to the clinic to begin the treatment. If any of you are phoning her please nag her too!

Ana, Popa's widow, is to be the new manager of the Guest House. Her work as District Nurse came to an end a few months ago and so she is delighted to begin a new career. Gabi, a lovely lady who lives immediately opposite the Guest House, is to be our Chef and Restaurant Manager. At present she is cooking 3 huge meals a day for the 20 men of the work force so she will be hoping for a rest once the Guest house opens.

Our first week will begin gently on the 2nd May with a group of White Cross supporters. This will be a trial week for us all and afterwards we will have ten days or so to assess everything and put right any problems. The official opening day will now be on the 25th May and we will be inviting all the local dignitaries, the press and TV, as well as everyone we can think of in Romania who has helped us over the last 16 years.

The young people will host the day and everyone will be entertained by local people performing traditional songs and dances.

After that the Guest house will be open for business proper!

Please think about booking or encouraging your friends to do so.

There are courses on offer but you can also book whenever you like and just do your own thing.

Some of you might like to bring a group. If so phone me to discuss. The phone number to use will be at the end of this letter.

An arrangement has been made with a car hire firm and new cars will be available for you to hire if you want to go off exploring on your own.

If you fancy a course this is what is available:

3rd-4th June WATER COLOUR PAINTING with Carolina Fox from Falmouth. This is a beautiful month for wild flowers and the scenery will be at its best. All levels are welcome especially beginners. Carolina is also running a similar course from **30th Sept- 6th Oct** when the Autumn colours are at their best.

13th-19th June KNOCKING AT HEAVEN'S DOOR, This is a week in which, with the help of local Orthodox and Greek Catholic priests, I will be attempting to share with you something of the beliefs and traditions of their particular churches. We will be attending services in both their churches and visiting a local monastery as well as having plenty of time to be quiet and enjoy the peace of the lovely countryside.

24th – 30th June SINGING IS GOOD FOR YOU with Barry Farley.

Accompanied by Helen Ardagh on the piano, Barry will encourage you to make music. It should be enormous fun as both Barry and Helen are a laugh a minute!

1st-7th July, 19th-25th Aug, 17th-22nd Sept and 14th-20th Oct. STEP BACK IN TIME with Ela Bud

Ela is Popa's third daughter and she is studying English and English Literature at Oradea University. Her exams will all be over in June and I have asked her to lead 4 tours taking our guests to the most beautiful and interesting places in Transylvania. She will take you by mini bus to see both people and places. This is an unspoilt country. For a few years yet you will be able to see for yourselves a way of life that has been unchanged for centuries.

8th-14th July BIRD WATCHING with Martin Rule. During these summer months the small birds are not so visible but in the mountains the birds of prey circle overhead. Each day you will go off into the wilds with Martin and a local guide to look for eagles and hawks. You may also surprise a bear or two!

26th Aug-1st Sept. POETRY AND PRAYER with Bishop Bill.

A quiet retreat based at Casa Delureni. Bishop Bill will share with you his thoughts about prayer and his great love of poetry and you will have time to really relax and enjoy the peace of the place.

9th-15th Sept WRITING FOR CONNECTION with Angela Stoner.

Have you ever felt you would like to be able to write? Perhaps you only want to make sense of some of your thoughts or perhaps you want to write poetry or even a novel. Angela is an experienced tutor who can help you express yourself and, if you wish, can also advise you on how to **go** about getting your work published. Come and give it a try!

23rd-29th Sept IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. MARTIN. St Martin of Tours came originally from Transylvania. As Bishop of Tours he encouraged hundreds of young men and women to go and find a "desert" place where they could be alone with Christ. I will be leading this retreat and will be hoping that we too can come close to achieving what Martin wished for us.

7th-13th Oct. PATCHWORK QUILTING WORKSHOP with Lesley Coles.

Lesley is an experienced teacher with amazing skills and knowledge. This week will be the ultimate experience for those of you who love to create. (Why not treat your wife or Mum to a holiday that will give her a new skill and a great deal of satisfaction.)

21st-27th Oct EXPLORATION THROUGH ART. With Claire Skales. Claire has worked as an art therapist in the most diverse of places and is skilled at getting us to really look at what we see and at encouraging us to express ourselves in colour and shape. This will be her first visit to Romania and she hopes to share this experience with some of you. Let her help you to awaken your senses to the world around you.

Travel by air is mostly via Budapest. **Easyjet** flies from Gatwick and Luton and BA and MALEV fly from Heathrow. Other European airlines can also provide a route via their own country eg. LUFTHANSA flies from Bristol to Munich and then you need to change and fly on to Timisoara (inside the Romanian border). This flight is more expensive than the UK flights but does provide a less exacting journey.

Once in Budapest or Timisoara a taxi will meet you to take you directly to the Guest house. The flight takes two and a half hours and the taxi journey from Budapest is four and a half hours and from Timisoara two hours. (Good clean toilet stops en route!)

If you think you couldn't stand trying to do the whole trip in one day you have the option of breaking your journey and staying overnight either near your airport of departure or in Budapest. The taxi drivers will be happy to pick you up from a hotel in the city.

The young people in our houses are all well and happy and looking forward to working in the Guest house. We have moved a few of them recently as, because of the new programme that Graham and Liz initiated, some have made such excellent progress that it is obvious that they can soon begin a supported living programme.

We have moved Viorel from house 5 to house 2, Ramona and Erzie from 5 to 4, Gheorghe from 2 to 5, Eva from 3 to 5, Adam from 3 to 4, Gusti from 4 to 3 and Ramona at house 2 refuses to move anywhere!!

This will not make much sense to many of you but our intention is to eventually create 4 houses where the children can live semi independent lives and to have house 5 as a sanctuary for those who will always need a lot of care.

In the next few weeks with money donated by the White Cross Mission USA we will be purchasing a minibus which will be used by the hotel to pick up the children from the farms and bring them to work and to be available for small group tours. Everything is falling into place, the only problem is will it all fall in time!

Do any of you have any money to spare? Silly question, I know, but while all this is going on we still have to pay salaries and feed the kids!

ALSO, at the bottom of the Guest house land there is a small concrete foundation ready for us to build a chapel when we have the money. It is only very small, 5mx5m sq, and the chapel will have clear glass double doors on 3 sides overlooking an amazing vista of countryside and distant hills. It will only cost £5,000 to build. Is there anybody out there who would like to give us the money? I never stop asking do I? But one day our kids, who have had such a traumatic start in life, will stand on their own feet and it will all be down to you. So a big thank you to you all for all you have given already and all you will give in the future.

Thank you and God bless!

Pat

PS Phone me if you want to book in the Guest house or ask questions about it. The only time my phone will be switched off will be on Sun and Wed mornings and at night. **PHONE 07867577416**. I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU.

PPS. If you think I'm pestering you too much just think how terrible it will be if I have to go haunting and pestering you from beyond the grave. Give now and avoid the trauma!

*To make a donation please send a cheque, payable
to the White Cross Mission to
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